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ABSTRACT

This volume contains 18 summaries of research on parental involvement, carried out by inservice teachers completing a Master's degree in multicultural studies. All but one of the participants were certified Texas teachers working in bilingual and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) education. Their research critically examined many facets of the involvement of limited-English-proficient parents in public schools in the Houston-Galveston Bay area. A preface by principal investigators and professors Andrea B. Bermudez and Steven J. Rakow describes the Master's program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, which provides inservice teachers with both clinical and research experiences with language-minority parents. An introduction by Anne Labay Ensle outlines the research emphases of the overall project and lists eight elements and factors identified by researchers as promoting successful parental involvement. The 18 Master's-level research projects specifically examined the effect of the "cat tracks" discipline system on parent involvement, parent attitudes toward ESL instruction and parent involvement activities, attitudes of minority parents toward other minorities, use of newsletters and a video of school activities to promote parent participation, involvement of Japanese parents in the United States compared to their behaviors in Japan, effects of reading aloud on vocabulary development, and parent involvement through social involvement. Each entry contains an abstract, summary of 2-3 pages, researcher profile, and contact information for faculty advisor. Teacher researchers were Gaylin Black, Virginia Krinke Buehring, Dolores Cavazos, Anne Labay Ensle, Yolanda Flores, Ila Jane Goetz, Brenda Hastings-Gongora, Dolores Hernandez Hix, Nora Sandoval-Ibarra, Catherine R. Johnson, Hanae Kimura, Laura M. Lopez, Rebecca Lopez, Sandra Joy Mangarella, Alicia Muniz, Christine Ortiz-Gatlin, Rebecca E. Prather, Hazel Ramirez, and Lila Kay Cook. Contains approximately 250 references. (SV)

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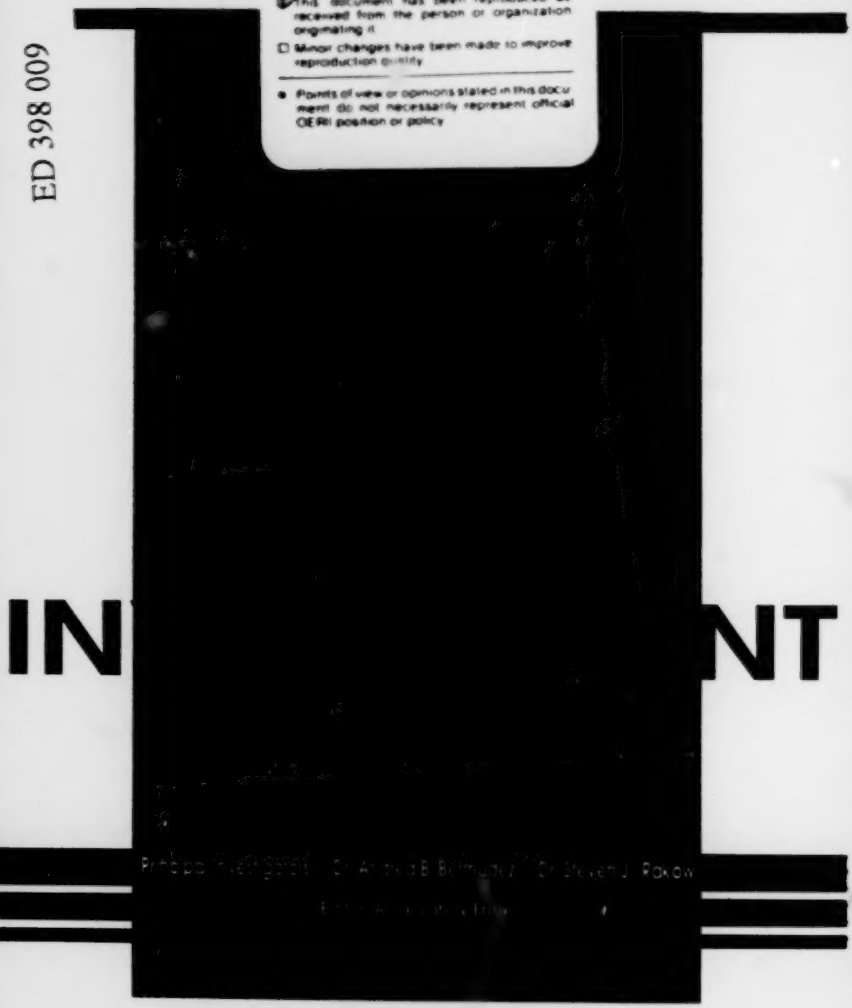

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A Collection of Research Summaries

By Title VII Graduate Students

University of Houston — Clear Lake

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

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DEDICATION

We, the University of Houston-Clear Lake 1991-1992 Masters' recipients of the Title VII grant for advanced studies in Multicultural Education, dedicate this publication to our professors, Dr. Andrea B. Bermúdez, Dr. Judith A. Márquez, and Dr. Steven J. Rakow.

ACKOWLEDGEMENT

We, the University of Houston-Clear Lake 1991-1992 Masters' recipients of the Title VII grant for advanced studies in Multicultural Education, express our appreciation and gratitude to the dedicated professors who guided us through our graduate studies and research, Dr. Andrea B. Bermúdez, Dr. Judith Márquez, and Dr. Steven J. Rakow. We appreciate the opportunity afforded us by the Title VII grant to complete our studies and research, which made this project possible. We recognize the important contributions made by the Texas teachers, administrators, and parents who so generously cooperated and gave of their time, expertise, and insight in assisting us in our research. We thank them for their invaluable contributions.

In addition, we wish to acknowledge that funding for the personnel training project was made possible through a grant from the Department of Education by the Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs (OBEMLA). Ms. Velma Robinson and Ms. Cynthia Ryan have served as project officers since its inception in 1990.

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Preface

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The Role of Higher Education in Strengthening Home-School Partnerships

Andrea B. Bermúdez
Steven J. Rakow
University of Houston-Clear Lake

In the past decades, research has pointed to the impact of the family in the child's learning process. Demographic changes in the United States have been dramatically affected by an increase in immigration, an increase in births to foreign-born mothers, and the "aging" of the white population . By the year 2000, it is estimated that the overall school population will continue to decrease in contrast with the expected 35% growth of Hispanic students (Oxford-Carpenter, Pol, López, Stupp. Gendell & Peng, 1984).

Customarily, communication between the schools and language minority parents is negative since the schools view these parents as being deficient, apathetic, and, quite often, the source of the child's problem (Davies, 1987). These culturally and linguistically diverse families remain alienated from the school system due to a variety of circumstances including: (a) work interference; (b) lack of confidence; (c) lack of English language skills, (d) lack of understanding of the home-school partnership and (e) insensitivity and hostility on the part of school personnel.

Personnel training programs must begin to focus on the preparation of professionals so the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse students can be met. Based on these facts and the increasing need to involve non-English speaking parents in the schools, the University of Houston-Clear Lake developed an innovative instructional model to provide teacher/parent clinical experiences (Bermúdez & Padrón, 1987, 1990). The model includes both clinical and research experiences with language minority parents.

The clinical teacher training dimension consists of a three-semester credit hour graduate course addressing the following three phases: (a) curriculum planning and design, (b) on-site direct instruction, and (c) data collection and evaluation. A three-year evaluation plan has been followed to determine the effectiveness of the clinical aspect of the model. Results from the first evaluation phase suggest that exposure to the training increased the parents' positive attitudes toward the home-school partnerships as well as their participation in school matters. Specifically, these results

indicated gains in the following areas of parental awareness: (a) the school's instructional program, (b) their responsibilities in the children's schooling, and (c) the need to increase their participation in school activities.

The second evaluation phase targeted the inservice teacher trainees. Their attitudinal changes were measured by examining their field notes taken throughout the duration of the project. Comments included their observations, feelings and opinions regarding their experience instructing parents. Analysis of these data indicated that 80% of the participating inservice teachers had a positive change of attitude towards minority parents. The 10% who already had positive attitudes stated that this experience increased their sensitivity towards the needs of the parents. No change in attitude was found for the remaining 10%.

The third evaluation phase included the effect of the program on the school children. Hispanic students in grades pre-Kindergarten to fifth grade participated in this assessment. Language development skills, as measured by achievement scores in English language arts and reading, were examined. The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between parent participation in school activities and student achievement. Students whose parents participated in this parent education program showed language development gains in contrast to those children whose parents did not participate and who showed a decline in achievement. This finding corroborates previous research which has noted the critical role of parents in the area of language skills development.

The research dimension of the model consisted of a six-semester hour master's projects course for inservice teachers completing their research requirement for a master's degree in multicultural studies under the sponsorship of Title VII of the Secondary and Elementary Education Act (Bermúdez & Rakow, in progress). The fruit of their successful labor is what this volume is all about.

Preservice and inservice programs need to be designed to foster knowledge and understanding about the needs and characteristics of language minority parents to eliminate unfounded apprehension towards the school system. As teachers come into direct contact with parents, some of the enigma surrounding the home is replaced with a more objective perception of the home environment (Bermúdez & Padrón, 1990). Only then can the home-school dialogue take place.

INTRODUCTION

ANNE LABAY ENSLE
Editor

In recognition of the unique educational needs of children in families with limited English proficient parents and the significant role parental involvement plays in the educational achievement of these students, master's degree research projects were conducted by graduate students at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in the educational area of parental involvement during the 1991-1992 academic year. The majority of the participants were Texas certified teachers, working in Bilingual and English as a Second Language Education, with the exception of one international student from Japan. The participating graduate students were recipients of a Title VII grant for advanced studies in Multicultural Education.

The purpose of their research was to critically examine the many facets of parental involvement of limited English proficient parents in the education of their children who were enrolled in Texas public schools in the Greater Houston-Galveston Bay area. The principal investigators examined the level of educational parental involvement of limited English proficient parents and the extent to which current knowledge in this area was being implemented in the public schools and their impact on LEP children. Areas of study were:

1. Parental involvement programs in operation and, in particular, any innovative features of them and the roles played by the administrators, teachers, and parents.
2. The availability of educational resources and opportunities in this area.
3. The effects of socialization and volunteerism.
4. The perceptions and attitudes of administrators, school districts, teachers, parents and the communities, concerning the special needs of LEP children and their parents.
5. Examination of parental instruction in language skills, parenting skills, and academic support of their children.
6. Identification of barriers to LEP parental involvement.
7. The effect of the ongoing efforts in this important area of education.

The results were encouraging. Uniformly, the researchers found an awareness and recognition of the needs of these children and their parents in attaining their potential. All school districts had programs in place, some were more innovative than others, some more effective than others, but all exemplifying a commitment to the education of these children.

The researchers identified effective elements and factors conducive to successful involvement of the LEP parents. They were:

1. Addressing the literacy of the entire LEP family and raising the linguistic skills of parents in English.
2. Removing the barriers which are perceived by LEP parents to exist between them and the school system.
3. Effective communication in their native languages, one on one continuous personal communications.
4. Assessment of the LEP parents' needs, and desires.
5. Attention to the LEP parents' comfort level, self-esteem and respect for their culture.
6. Introduction and the guidance of the LEP parents into involvement, decision-making and governance.
7. Making the LEP parent feel important, comfortable, and welcome in the schools their children attend.
8. Educating the LEP parents on the schools' goals, expectations, and opportunities available to their children.

The schools of 1992, have created climates of respect and support for the desires and needs of parents and also offer the element of parental choice. These research findings are reflective of the current educational approach of the 1990's, the appreciation for the importance of the role of parental involvement in the total educational plan for LEP children. It is axiomatic that parental involvement positively affects a child's learning experience. The foundation of successful parental involvement is an appreciation and awareness of its value on the part of school administrators and teachers. The formation of cohesive partnerships between schools, teachers, communities, and parents working together to enrich and enhance the current educational structures in order to allow not only LEP children, but all children to reach their academic potential, is further evidenced by the findings of these research studies.

An Evaluation of the cat tracks discipline system

GAYLIN BLACK

Abstract

The following research study was designed to investigate the relationship between the use of a specific discipline tracking system and parental involvement. Parents, teachers, and students living in a semi-rural area located forty miles south of Houston, Texas, participated in the use of a teacher-designed discipline system. One hundred fourth grade subjects, sixty of whom were managed behaviorally using a specific discipline system, were monitored for this study. The teachers of the other forty subjects disciplined their respective students using various traditional techniques. Results showed that the use of a specific, structure discipline system promoted parental involvement. Through anecdotal accompaniments, it was concluded that not only the quantity of parental contacts increased with the use of the discipline system, but also the quality of parental involvement.

Summary

The purpose of this project was to investigate the relationship between the use of a specific discipline tracking system and the quantity and quality of parental involvement. It was hypothesized that the use of a specific management system would increase both the quantity and quality of parental involvement. A management discipline system designed by teachers in a semi-rural Texas school district was used. Their system, the Cat Tracks discipline program, was used in three of the five elementary schools in the district. Students from the two non-participating schools provided the control group. Twenty students from each school were selected as subjects. This number represented approximately one-fifth of the fourth grade population. The study was concentrated at the fourth grade level. Sixty students were evaluated according to the Cat Tracks discipline program. The forty remaining students were assessed according to individual teachers and school policies.

Gaylin Black was born in Freeport, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and French at the University of Texas at Austin. She was a member of Kappa Delta Pi. She was A Title VII grant recipient and obtained a Master of Science degree in Multicultural Education in May, 1992. Ms. Black is a 4th grade teacher at Frontier Elementary School in Angleton ISD.

The quantity and quality of parental contacts were closely examined according to the tracking forms and communication logs. Operationally, quantity was defined as the number of contacts, and quality was defined as the type of parental contact. The Cat Tracks weekly tracking form was the primary instrument used for the collection of data. A student's conduct, effort, and completion of work evaluation was noted on the tracking form by the teacher. Parent communication logs were kept by the teachers which provided information about the type and number of follow-up contacts with the parents. The logs also provided all of the required information regarding parental contacts in the schools not using the Cat Tracks discipline system.

To determine quantity, an exact count of teacher-to-parent contacts was made at both the participating and non-participating schools. At the participating schools, this consisted in the counting of contacts on the tracking forms. For the assigned subjects at the non-participating schools, the number of contacts on parent communication logs was counted. The number of teacher-to-parent contacts were also closely examined for the subjects involved in this study. Both the tracking forms and communication logs provided the needed information. Copies of teacher notes were also used to complete the count.

An indication of the quality of communication was shown by the types and nature of parental contacts. An examination of the purpose of the contact was noted. It was determined if the contact was due to academic or disciplinary problems. It was important to consider the outcome of the initial to the follow-up contact to determine if either a disciplinary or academic problem was resolved. It was also important to determine if parents continued to communicate with the teachers once the initial contact was established.

An exact count of parental contacts was made for both participating groups. The number of contacts for the sixty subjects at the participating schools ranged from zero for three subjects to a high of thirty-two contacts. For the subjects in non-participating schools, the range was not as broad. The range for these subjects was zero contacts to sixteen contacts. The mean number of contacts for the Cat Tracks group was 9.35. The mean number of contacts in the non-Cat Tracks group was 4.875. A t-test was conducted comparing the number of parent contacts in both the participating and non-participating groups. Results of these calculations demonstrated that there was a significant difference

between the number of parental contacts for the Cat Tracks group and non-participants. This test revealed a calculated t value of 3.77 for the two groups. Quantitatively, the number of parental contacts noted for the group treated with the Cat Tracks discipline management system was far greater than the number of contacts for the traditional group. The number of contacts for this group was approximately one-half that of the Cat Tracks group. Statistically, the Cat Tracks behavioral management system was shown to be far more effective in generating and maintaining parental involvement. The Cat Tracks discipline form allowed both parents and teachers to clearly see the problem areas at school on a weekly basis, the number of times homework was not done, and the number of times a student did not follow through with parental signatures on important papers. Results indicated that not only did the homeroom teachers benefit from a specific discipline system, but the teachers in special areas such as Chapter 1, physical education and music also benefited. Teachers in the traditional group indicated that larger problems were generally handled only when a crisis point was reached. While the Cat Tracks discipline system appears to be quite successful at the fourth grade level, further research should explore the effects of this particular management system on other grade levels. The findings of this study appear to be consistent with research, both in the areas of discipline management and parental involvement.

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A Comparison of attitudes toward English as a second language by the parents of limited English proficient students and the parents of English proficient students

VIRGINIA KRINKE BUEHRING

Abstract

The purpose of this survey research project was to determine and compare the amount of support or awareness held by the parents of the students enrolled in the ESL program and the mainstream program in two elementary schools in a mid-size town located on the Texas Gulf Coast. The survey participants were 50 parents of students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 4, randomly selected from the ESL and the mainstream student populations. The various ethnicities represented were Hispanic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Croatian, Portuguese, Filipino, Kuwaiti, Pakistani, and Saudi Arabian. The surveys were presented in three different languages, English, Vietnamese, and Spanish. The Likert Scale was utilized to summarize the responses to the survey questions. The hypothesis was that more support or awareness for the ESL program would be given by the parents of the ESL population. The results of the project made the assumption invalid. Both of the surveyed populations compared almost identically and expressed support for the ESL programs conducted at both schools The t test results derived from the survey data indicated that slightly more support was held by the mainstream population for the ESL programs.

Summary

According to a 1980 Gallup Poll on "Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools", 82% polled said that non-English speaking children should have special language programs available to learn English (Elan, Rose, & Gallup, 1980, p. 33). Twelve years later, this same attitude was reflected in the results of this project. Theories of language acquisition and empirical data indicate that parental attitudes and behavior have a positive effect on children's

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VIRGINIA KRINKE BUEHRING was born in Blue Earth, Minnesota. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at Concordia Lutheran College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science degree in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Buehring is an ESL Elementary teacher at Morgan Elementary School and Parker Elementary School in Galveston ISD.

educational achievements. Whether parents prefer a bilingual or monolingual program for their language minority children also appears to be associated with factors such as societal attitudes toward their particular ethnic group, immigrant history, and socio-economic status. Attitudes about language preference are likely to be influenced by one's belief concerning society and the role that language plays in establishing group identity or group differences.

This research study utilized a cross-sectional survey which measured the attitudes of the ESL students' parents and the attitudes of the mainstream students' parents. The responses were summed and compared using the five-point Likert Scale. An open-ended question at the end of the survey asked for a sentence or two explaining how the participants felt about school programs that help LEP children learn English. These responses provided the opportunity for the respondents to write their statements of support.

The greatest divergence in the responses between the two populations was found in the statement, "the responsibility for teaching English should be with the school rather than the home." Both groups indicated that the home should have a major responsibility in supporting LEP children in learning English. The ESL students' parents responses indicated more support for the schools to teach English. The parents indicated they would have difficulty helping their children learn English in that they also were not English proficient. Of the ten survey questions, two questions in particular epitomized the essence of the survey. The respondents supported statements that all non-English speakers ought to have a special program available for learning English. Also, it was unequivocally stated that being bilingual should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness. Respondents to the surveys indicated that rather than an exchange of customs, ESL programs should just focus on American customs. The mainstream population felt that the ESL students would not lose appreciation for their own culture by learning English but the ESL students' parents indicated a lack of certainty in maintaining the appreciation for their native culture.

For evaluation purposes, each survey was given a numerical value by summing the responses to the questions using the Likert scale. If a parent's responses were the most negative possible, then each question had a value of one, and the total for all ten questions was ten. The most positive possible value for one survey was fifty. A score of thirty was considered neutral. The range of scores for

the mainstream parents was 27-47 with a mean of 37.53 and the ESL range was 30-42 with a mean of 36.45, indicative that both groups responded favorably to the ESL program. The *t*-test statistically confirmed that the mainstream parents' scores were more positive than that of the ESL respondents' scores. When the returned surveys were assimilated, it was noticed that very few responses had marked "no opinion" as an option. This indicated that there are strong feelings associated with attitudes toward the ESL program. Some survey questions had handwritten comments by the respondents to insure clarification of their answers. Parents presented the problems of assimilation, the necessity to learn English, the need for the development of confidence, and the requirements for citizenship as being areas of focus that could be resolved through Bilingual and ESL Education Programs. Important information conveyed from the survey results indicated that there is more LEP parental support for Bilingual and ESL Education and that involvement can be expected from parents if the schools take the initiative to ask for their participation.

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Using a video of school activities to encourage parents to volunteer

DOLORES CAVAZOS

Abstract

The purpose of this research survey was to determine if the video could be an effective means of communication that would encourage volunteerism. This study was conducted at an elementary school in the suburbs of Houston. The community served by the school is defined as low income and has a high Hispanic population. The study included the development and use of a school video and a 16 item survey in English and Spanish plus demographics. The survey included three areas: the video as a communication strategy, parent's opinions toward volunteering, and parent's needs. Fifty-one participants attended a parent-teacher meeting, viewed a video, and answered questions pertaining to their attitudes toward the video and volunteering. The video included scenes from the regular school day, special activities, and vignettes of parents volunteering in different areas at the school. The video enabled the parents to see exactly what type of activities the volunteers did and how they accomplished them. A large amount of useful information was gathered which would allow the school to create a volunteer program reflecting the parents' needs.

Summary

The purpose of this research project was to determine if the video could be an effective means of communication which would encourage parent volunteerism. It was hypothesized that the video could be an effective medium of communication with parents. It was further hypothesized that the video would enable the parents to see what types of activities they could engage in as volunteers. It was anticipated that parents' opinions would be more positive toward volunteering as a result of viewing a specially prepared school video. This study was conducted in an elementary school in a low income area in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. A sample of

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Dolores Cavazos was born in Mercedes, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Pan American College in Edinburg, Texas. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science degree in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Cavazos is a kindergarten bilingual teacher at L. F. Smith Elementary School in Pasadena ISD.

51 parents with an ethnicity of 63.4% Hispanic, 3.2% Black, 29.6% Caucasian, and 2.8% other, participated in an observation of a prepared video and follow-up survey. The video enabled the parents to see exactly what type of activities school volunteers participated in. A 16 item survey in English and Spanish attempted to determine information in three areas: the video as a communication strategy, the parents' opinions toward volunteerism, and the parents' needs. The video included scenes from the regular school day, special activities, and vignettes of parents volunteering in different areas of the school such as the library, clinic, office, cafeteria, and classroom. There was no narration on the video. This facilitated the video's use with the language difference in the group. A survey then followed the video.

The survey addressed the parent's needs through an attitude checklist in which parents chose from a list of items relating to where and how often they volunteered. When they did not volunteer, they chose items that explained why not. The response format for the rest of the instrument was yes, no, and no opinion. In addition, space was provided for comments. A separate volunteer sheet was available for those who were interested in signing up as volunteers. Two independent t-test results were used to determine gender differences with respect to attitudes regarding the video and attitudes regarding volunteering. In addition, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were differences by country of ancestry (Mexico, El Salvador, and Paraguay) with respect to volunteering. When warranted, the Scheffe F-Test was used as post hoc analysis to determine differences between groups. A frequency distribution was also used to examine the parents' needs.

The t-test results by gender showed no significant difference ($p > .05$) between males ($M = 10.8$ $SD = 4.76$), and females ($M = 11.3$ $SD = 3.9$) regarding their perceptions about the video as a communication strategy. The t-test results by gender showed that the difference between the two groups are approached significance ($p = .076$) males ($M = 4.22 = 1.78$), and females ($M = 4.97$ $SD = 1.31$) with respect to volunteering in the school.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine differences by country of ancestry with respect to their perceptions of the video. A significant difference ($p \leq .05$) was found. Results from a Scheffe post hoc analysis further determined that there was a difference between parents born in Mexico

($\underline{M}$ = 10.60)) and Paraguay ($\underline{M}$ = 30). A difference was also found between parents born in El Salvador ($\underline{M}$ = 11.33) and Paraguay (M = 30).

In addition, a frequency distribution was used to describe parents' needs. The data indicated that 36% of the parents did not volunteer at all while 38% volunteered one to two times weekly and 26% volunteered when called. Family responsibilities were listed by 54% of the parents as the main reason they could not volunteer. Another reason listed by 18% of the parents was limited English ability and feelings of incompetence. There were 28% who did not respond to this item. As a result of viewing the video, 64% of the parents indicated they would be willing to volunteer at the school. Twenty-six percent would not and 10% did not respond to this item.

Judging from the results in this study, the parents of this school wanted to become more involved, but because of barriers, either in language or communication, are hesitant to volunteer. The video enabled the parents to see exactly what types of activities volunteers are engaged in. As a result of the video, many of the parents who participated in this study were willing to volunteer based on the information from the video. Those who could not volunteer gave the school valuable information as to the parents' problems. The information gathered from this study gave the school information necessary to create a volunteer program based upon parents' needs and knowledge of problem areas that needed to be addressed. The Greenwood and Hickman study (1991) concluded that parent volunteering was an important form of parental involvement. One way to improve parental involvement is through the use of a video where parents can see what types of things are being done in the schools and to encourage them to become active members.

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A Study of current trends in parental involvement programs for parents of limited English proficient children in the Houston-Galveston area

ANNE LABAY ENSLE

Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to determine the essential elements associated with the successful involvement of limited English proficient parents in the educational process of their children. The method of study involved the examination of parental involvement in three disparate school districts' programs for parents of LEP students in the Houston-Galveston area. The school districts were selected because of differences in demographics, size, and operation. The scope of this study was limited to a sampling of selected programs from each of the three districts that were representative of the innovations and initiatives currently in operation. Administrators and teachers were surveyed to profit from their expertise and to evaluate the current initiatives in LEP parental involvement. The areas of communication, intervention, parenting, educational opportunities, volunteer programs, and other innovative initiatives were examined. Commonalties that existed throughout all the districts were the recognition of the potential of the educational involvement of limited English proficient parents, the development of more comprehensible communications, and the movement in community participation and volunteerism to augment and enhance their current educational systems. The research indicated the presence of concentrated efforts to form effective partnerships between schools and parents to further the educational opportunities available for LEP children as well as the existence and effectiveness of innovative programs.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine effective elements associated with successful involvement of limited English proficient parents in the educational process of their children through the examination of three Texas public school districts' parental involvement programs in the Houston-Galveston area. The research

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ANNE LABAY ENSLE was born in Wharton, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Houston, where she was a recipient of the United States Steel Clay Bailey-Fred Poole, Pan American Award. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science degree in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi. Ms. Ensle is an adult ESL instructor at Houston Community College.

issues examined were the identification of the operatives, the strategies, and the elements that were present in successful programs. The effectiveness of the programs was determined through interviews with administrators and teachers, a questionnaire survey designed and submitted to teachers, research into the law and legal regulations, and on-site observation of parental involvement programs. The availability of involvement activities for limited English proficient parents was being addressed by all three school districts. Care was taken to select representative programs and practices that were most illustrative of current trends and which involved innovative approaches in LEP parental involvement. These communities had reacted positively toward meeting the demands placed upon their educational systems by the families of limited English proficient students. The communities' involvement included their volunteerism of professional services, as instructional aides, providers of child-care, and carpool transportation, as well as material resources as needed by LEP families.

The most important factor found in all three school districts was the recognition of the necessity for, and the appreciation of, the beneficial effects of parental involvement in the educational process of LEP students. There was also a sincere desire and effort to better involve and inform parents of LEP students as to the schools' educational goals, opportunities, and expectations. Bilingual meetings, translators, bilingual newsletters, and videos were used to educate the LEP parents on the educational goals and available opportunities. Transportation and on-site child care were provided for the LEP parents so they could attend.

A skillful blending of federal, state, and local grants and initiatives in complementary components had been achieved by the studied school districts in the implementation of LEP parental involvement programs. All school districts involved in this research study utilized federal funding and guidelines. Chapters 1 and 2, Title VII, the Family English Literacy Program (FELP) program, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) were important programs used to provide family literacy programs. The most innovative program for family literacy took an existing program originally funded under a Chapter 1 grant and expanded it by fueling it with a Chapter 2 grant plus a local grant from a county agency for amnesty and adult education, as well as a grant from a local industry to provide computers for intergenerational education.

All schools studied had forms of site-based management in place which allowed the schools the flexibility and input necessary

to customize and tailor their available educational resources and services to meet the specific needs of the LEP population they served. Site-based management was a strong and positive element in the formation and operation of effective LEP parental involvement programs. The new state regulations for site-based management had been anticipated, and all three districts had parent advisory committees and parent teacher organizations already in place that allowed more decision-making and governance for parents of LEP students. There was increased community involvement in the sense of a supportive network similar to an extension of the family. There was an emphasis on early intervention at the elementary level to involve parents of LEP students in the education of their children. This effort in the initial stages of their children's education included instruction in parenting, creation of favorable at-home-study environments, and intergenerational education.

Another crucial factor was the attempt to improve the literacy of the parents themselves. The survey of the administrators and teachers highlighted an intergenerational approach to education to truly involve parents of LEP children. The problems and attitudes of the LEP parents were being analyzed by both administrators and teachers through surveys and interviews. Some important information from the teacher survey indicated that the needs of the entire family must be considered. The parents' own levels of literacy had to be improved through classes in English language skills, as well as classes for the development of skills in parenting. It was uniformly determined that it was imperative that LEP parents be educated as to the positive effects of education and also that it was further essential that LEP parents be educated as to the importance of providing support and encouragement of their children in addition to providing for their basic physical needs.

One requisite for parental involvement was consideration for the comfort level of the parents. It was crucial that LEP parents feel they were important and welcome so that they could be comfortable in the school setting. Each district determined that it was essential that LEP parents be brought physically into the schools to familiarize them with the actual physical plant and to acquaint them with the staff and teachers. Special parent rooms equipped with materials such as instructional videos and materials which the parents could check out to use in the home were provided. Newsletters in the parents' native languages were sent home. Personal invitations by aides and teachers, and special child-parent events were effective attempts to involve the parents physically in their children's schools.

Effective communication was an important issue for both the schools and parents. The surveyed teachers indicated that overcoming language barriers was the first step in parental involvement. Communication in a comprehensible form on first contact was necessary. A bilingual support staff to ensure this important feature needed to be present to adequately inform and sustain the involvement of the LEP parents. The teachers indicated that regular and personal communication had to be established.

Opportunities for governance and decision-making were gradually being presented by the school districts to LEP parents. The administrators recognized that it was necessary for the LEP parents to be led into involvement and then guided into governance and decision-making. An analysis of the responses of two teacher survey questions indicated a definite relationship between the scholastic improvement of LEP students whose parents were involved in governance and decision-making. The data indicated that teachers and administrators perceived that those LEP parents who participated in decision-making and governance, had children who improved scholastically. The most important considerations being recognized by the public school districts were the recognition of the needs, attitudes, and desires of the entire LEP family. The most important issue being addressed by public school administrators and teachers was the literacy of both LEP children and their parents as a whole unit, the family.

Contact person: UHCL Faculty, Dr. Steven J. Rakow 713-283-3590

Attitudes and perspectives of parents of children in English as a second language classes toward public elementary school

YOLANDA FLORES

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of parents of children enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes toward a public elementary school in southeast Texas. This study examined the parents' characteristics and compared the gender, age, education, home language, family structure and employment of parents of children enrolled in ESL classes. Home and telephone interviews were conducted in English and Spanish using the survey questionnaire designed by the researcher. The sample for this study consisted of fifty parents of Hispanic children in ESL classes in grades 1-5 from a lower socioeconomic school district. Differences in parents' characteristic variables with respect to parental attitudes were examined via the post hoc Scheffe F-test ($p < .05$) when warranted. The ANOVA ($p < .05$) and the t-test ($p < .05$) were also utilized. Analysis concentrated on five categories. They were measures of feelings of awareness, participation, expectations, interaction and barriers to participation.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare differences between gender, age, education, home language, family structure and employment of parents of children enrolled in English as a Second Language classes in a southeast Texas school district on measures of feelings of awareness, participation, expectations, interaction and barriers to participation. It was hypothesized that: (1) there would be significant differences between home language and attitudes toward participation barriers; (2) there would be significant differences between educational level and attitudes toward participation; (3) there would be significant differences between family structure (single or dual parents) and attitudes

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YOLANDA FLORES was born in Alice, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology and Political Science at Texas A & I University. She was a recipient of a Title VII grant and completed a Master of Science degreein Multicultural Education at the University of Houston- Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Flores is a 3rd grade bilingual teacher at Jacinto City Elementary School in Galena Park ISD.

toward participation; and (4) there would be significant differences between employment and attitudes toward participation.

The sample consisted of fifty parents of Hispanic children in ESL classes in grades 1-5 from a lower socioeconomic school district in southeastern Texas. The researcher interviewed 15 subjects personally and 18 by telephone. There were 17 subjects who answered the survey independently. The survey questionnaire was administered in English and Spanish, and identified 68% females and 32% males. Spanish was identified as the only language spoken at home by 72%. The survey consisted of 23 items. The questionnaire was designed to measure the attitudes of parents toward public elementary school.

The survey measured five categories. They were awareness, participation, expectations, interaction and barriers to participation. Feelings of awareness of parents were measured by knowledge of rules, of the instruction their children received in ESL classrooms and knowledge of student progress. Feelings of participation measured the involvement of parents in Parent Teacher Association, homework, activities at home, rewards, discipline and involvement in school activities. Feelings of expectations included role models, expectations and language. Feelings of interaction were measured by whether or not the student requested the parent's help and the relationship of parents with their child.

Barriers to participation included statements that expressed the reasons for deterring parents from volunteering in school activities. Parents (68%) said that they did not volunteer in school activities because they lacked English skills. Employment was a barrier for 65% of the parents. Ninety-nine percent needed the teachers' help to know what to do for their child at home to ensure his or her academic success.

Interaction between parents and children involved statements that indicated the type of relationships they had with one another. Parents (76%) said that their children initiated requests for help. Parents (100%) claimed to have positive relationships with their children. Participation included statements about feelings of being involved in school matters and being involved with the education of their children at home. The participants indicated 43% attended PTA meetings, 78% desired to be involved in school matters and 74% wanted to assist in reading tutorials. At home, 92% felt that it was important to assist their children with homework, 86% said that they initiated learning activities at home and 92% rewarded their children's success.

The "yes" or "no" responses to each of the 23 items of the survey reflected whether a statement was true most of the time. The parent characteristics were measured in percentages by frequency distribution and were obtained in the same survey instrument in the form of background data. The researcher used one-tailed, unpaired t-test ($p < .05$) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) ($p < .05$) to test the hypothesis. In addition attitudes by gender and family structure toward the five areas of parental involvement were measured with t-tests. Additional analyses (ANOVA) ($p < .05$) were used to examine by age, educational level, home language, employment and parental attitudes toward the five areas of parental involvement. When warranted, the post hoc Scheffe, F-test ($p < .05$) was used to determine differences between groups .

In general, the results of this research study suggest that significant differences exist between the unemployed group and the group that worked part-time. The presence of the significant differences may have been influenced by language and culture. The results suggested that there was a significant difference with respect to feelings of interaction by gender. Females may hold more positive views of interaction. The presence of the significant differences may have been affected by differences in the subculture. Significant differences with respect to feelings of interaction by age may have been influenced by differences in personality factors.

In general, the results of this research survey do not suggest significant differences with respect to feelings of barriers of participation by home language. There was an absence of significant differences with respect to feelings of participation by educational level. There was an absence of significant differences with respect to feelings of participation by reason of family structure. The results suggest no significant differences in feelings of participation by employment. The original hypotheses were not supported. Regardless of their education, family structure, or work status, parents expressed a need for the teacher's guidance in how to assist in their children's education at home.

Contact Person: UHCL Faculty Advisor Dr. Andrea B. Bermúdez, 713-283-3590

Attitudes of minority parents toward other minorities present in the same school and the possible effects on parental involvement

ILA JANE GOETZ

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the attitudes of minority parents toward other minority groups that are present in the same elementary school and the possible relationship between their attitudes and the amount of their parental involvement. Using a survey form, parents of black, white, Asian, and Hispanic students at an elementary school in a large urban school district were asked about their attitudes toward other cultures and minorities present in the school and their level of parental involvement in specific school activities. Results of the survey indicated that the age and level of education of the respondents were more significant factors in determining the attitudes toward other ethnic groups than ethnicity or gender.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the attitudes of minority parents toward other minority groups that were present in the same school and their level of parental involvement as well as the other factors that might also affect their participation. An ERIC search of current literature revealed no appropriate studies that examined the attitudes of minority parents toward other minority cultures present in the same school. Studies were found that dealt with issues of desegregation and its effect on black and Hispanic parents and students in white majority schools. However, since many of our large urban school districts are now comprised of minority-majority students, the attitudes of minority parents toward other minorities was seen as an area to be explored.

Ila Jane Goetz was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Teaching degree from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She was named Teacher of the Year in the Houston Independent School District at Frost Elementary in 1976. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Goetz is a kindergarten teacher at Codwelll Elementary School in Houston ISD.

A survey form using a Likert scale was developed to elicit information from the parents as to their feelings toward other cultures, the school activities that they were involved in, and the number of the times they participated in them. Opportunity was given for the parents to respond through short answers about specific likes and dislikes about the school and possible changes that they would like to see in the school. Demographic information included age and gender of the respondent, relationship to the student, country of origin, occupation, level of education, home language, and distance respondent lived from the school. The population surveyed included 50 black respondents, seven white respondents, three Hispanic respondents, and thirteen Asian respondents. The instrument was available in English and Vietnamese. A Spanish version was not needed because all the Hispanic parents were fluent in English. All but two (Asian) respondents returned surveys.

The overall population viewed themselves as open-minded, positive in their attitudes toward other cultures and minorities, and fairly involved with their children's school activities. Questions on the survey were not clustered so that one question would not suggest an answer on another question. The clustering of the questions was done after the surveys were returned for the analysis of the data. Cluster I surveyed attitudes toward other cultures and minorities within the school. An overall mean, 1.75, showed all groups had a positive value toward minorities present in the school. A correlation matrix showed that this cluster was a significant predictor of Cluster V--the actual involvement of the respondents in parental involvement activities. Age appeared to have more of an effect on attitudes than the variables of ethnicity, gender, or educational level, with younger respondents (29 or younger) showing the more positive attitudes.

Cluster I dealt with attitudes toward other cultures/minority groups outside of school. Again, the overall population showed a positive attitude toward other cultures with a mean value of 2.3 on a scale of 1 to 5. Younger respondents again viewed themselves as having a more positive attitude than the older respondents with gender and educational level not appearing to have a significant effect.

Cluster III was concerned with the attitudes of the respondents toward the English as a Second Language program. Those respondents with higher levels of education appeared to be the most positive in their attitude toward the ESL program. Hispanic

parents were the least positive in their opinion on the effectiveness of the ESL program. Age and gender did not significantly affect attitudes.

Clusters IV and V examined attitudes toward parental involvement in the school and the actual amount of parental involvement. The analysis of variance tested differences among the four ethnic groups for responses and revealed a near significance difference with black respondents indicating the most positive attitudes and the greatest amount of parental involvement. A correlation matrix for Clusters IV and V showed that the more positive a parent's attitude was toward parental involvement, thé more involved they actually were ($r = -.5266$). An ANOVA also revealed a significant relationship between educational levels in Cluster V responses. Respondents with higher levels of education were more actively involved in school activities than were parents with lower education. Age did not have a significant effect.

Ethnicity did not appear to have a significant effect on the attitudes of minority respondents, except in the areas of actual parent participation and involvement. Open-ended responses revealed that a lack of transportation and the inability to speak English were the primary factors for the lack of participation by the Asian parents, not ethnicity. Age and level of education appeared to have the greatest effects on respondents' attitudes. Trends indicated that younger respondents and respondents with higher education (above secondary level) were more positive in their attitudes toward other minorities than older and/or less educated respondents.

Implications of this study indicate that ethnicity may not be the dominant factor in determining attitudes toward other ethnic groups. Age and level of education appear to have a greater influence. Multicultural classes should be encouraged so that all students have an opportunity to meet, work with, and form positive attitudes toward peers from other cultures. Multicultural education should also be a continuing part of inservices for all teachers and staff members so that a respect for all students is maintained and skills for working with parents and students from cultures other than their own can be learned and utilized.

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The Effects of reading aloud on vocabulary development

BRENDA HASTINGS-GONGORA

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to measure the effect of the training parents in read-aloud techniques on the vocabulary development of kindergarten students. The subjects, eleven 5- & 6-year-olds and their parents, were randomly selected from two bilingual kindergarten classrooms and assigned to either Group 1 (experimental) or Group 2 (control). The treatment, a parent training workshop on read-aloud techniques, was conducted in Spanish and administered to the parents of the subjects in Group 1. The parent training workshop model had the following four components: motivation, information, practice and application. The experimental group was comprised of three girls and three boys in an age range from 5-years 10-months to 6-years 6-months The control group was comprised of two girls and three boys in the age range from 6-years one-month to 6-years 6-months. Only the experimental group attended a training and information session in read-aloud techniques. The control group received no instruction. Both groups of parents were provided with books in Spanish to read-aloud to their children for five weeks.. The *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody Adaptación Hispanoamericana* (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test--Hispanic-American Adaptation) was used for the pretest and the posttest. This test measures an individual's receptive or hearing vocabulary. An unpaired *t*-test was used to compare the gain scores of each individual in the control and experimental groups. Although not statistically significant, the results seem to favor the experimental group. The two primary benefits of this study were to increase parental involvement while making the parents better teachers at home and to impact positively the home literacy environment.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to measure the effect of training parents in read-aloud techniques on the vocabulary development of kindergarten students. It was hypothesized that if teachers could be trained in read-aloud techniques, so could parents. Whitehurst

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BRENDA HASTINGS-GONGORA was born in Laredo, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Houston. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science degree in Multicultural education in August, 1992. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi. Ms. Hastings Gongora is a kindergarten bilingual teacher at DeZavala Elementary School in Goose Creek Consolidated ISD.

et al. (1988) tested the hypothesis that mothers who read picture books to their children have a direct effect on the rate of their children's language acquisitions. This study investigated whether training parents in read-aloud techniques would improve the vocabulary development of their children. The experimental group consisted of three girls and three boys ranging in ages from 5-years 10-months to 6-years 6-months. The control group consisted of two girls and three boys ranging in ages from 6-years one-month to 6-years 6-months. Spanish was the dominant language of each subject. All but one of the subjects would be described as belonging to the lower socio-economic class. The remaining subjects may be described as belonging to the middle socio-economic class.

The subjects were randomly selected and assigned to Group 1 (experimental group) or to Group 2 (control group). The children in both groups were given the *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody Adaptación Hispanoamericana* (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Hispanic-American) for the pretest and the posttest. The test measures an individual's receptive or hearing vocabulary. It is one of the few available achievement tests that shows the extent of Spanish vocabulary acquisition by the child. One of the purposes of this test is the use of the pretest and posttest procedure to measure growth in vocabulary as a result of Spanish language instruction (1986, p.5).

The experimental group of parents and their children were invited to attend a two-hour workshop on read-aloud techniques conducted in Spanish by the principle investigator. The researcher utilized an adaptation of the Parent Workshop Reading: A Shared Experience model that was developed by Etta Johnson and the Arlington Public Schools in 1988 (Violand-Sanchez, Sutton, & Ware, 1991). The model has the following four major components: motivation, information, practice and application. The workshop began with a brief welcome, a getting acquainted warm-up, and a sincere thank you for attendance. The training started with the motivation segment. The principle investigator demonstrated to the group in Spanish how an adult reads to a child. The researcher modeled a discussion of the book's cover to encourage the children to use descriptive language. The researcher stopped at strategic places in the reading to allow the children to predict the outcome of the story. For the information component of the workshop, the presenter shared an article from *Ser Padres* (a parent's magazine in Spanish) citing the importance of reading to

young children (Trelease, 1992). After the demonstration, the researcher conducted a dialogue in Spanish. The parents then practiced reading to their children as the investigator monitored and offered suggestions. At the end of the workshop, the parents were given a packet of seven children's books in Spanish and instructions on how to keep a log of the books read. Parents were also instructed to return the packet when all the books were read so that a new packet could be issued. At the end of five weeks the group met again to share experiences with one another. The control group received a packet of books to read to their children. A log was provided for these parents but no specific instructions were given and no training or information on the benefits of reading were provided for this group. The final step of the procedure was the posttesting of all the children using the same test. The difference between the posttest and the pretest (gain score) was calculated for each subject in the control and experimental group. The mean gain scores for each group were compared using an unpaired t test for independent samples. The results indicated there was no significant ($p>.05$) difference between the experimental ($M=8.67$; $df=9$) and the control ($M=5.4$; $df=9$) groups. The study produced two primary benefits. A final meeting which consisted of parental discussion and exchange of their experiences using the read-aloud techniques indicated success. The increase in parental involvement made the parents better teachers at home. The researcher was also able to extrapolate from the parental discussions that the home literacy environment was impacted positively.

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Involvement of Hispanic parents in the bilingual program

DOLORES HERNÁNDEZ HIX

Abstract

This research study examined the relationship between Hispanic parental involvement and the level of grades received by their children. Participants included 65 Bilingual elementary students and their parents in grades one through four in the two elementary bilingual schools in a school district located on the Texas Gulf Coast. A parent questionnaire and the students' grade point averages were compared. The research indicated that 90% of the parents were satisfied with their children's grades and felt that Bilingual Education was beneficial for their children. They also indicated that parents should be provided with parent-teacher conferences and Parent Teacher Organizations meetings in their native language. The parent participants were involved and interested in their children's education.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to examine the relationship between Hispanic parental involvement and the level of academic achievement of students as measured by their grades. The null hypothesis examined in this study was that there would be no difference in the grade point average of Hispanic students with demonstrated parental involvement and the grade point average of Hispanic students lacking parental involvement. Two Bilingual elementary schools with a combined bilingual population of approximately 300 students, located on the Texas Gulf Coast, were selected for the study. Sixty-five parents of Bilingual students enrolled in grades one through four responded to the survey. Parental involvement was measured through a questionnaire and interviews. Parental participation was measured through attendance at parent-teacher conferences, Parent Teacher

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DOLORES HERNANDEZ HIX was born in Galveston, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She was a presenter at the 1991 REACH Conference. She was named teacher-of-the-year for Alamo Elementary in 1991. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Hix is a 2nd grade bilingual teacher at Wilson Elementary School in McAllen ISD.

Organizations, Parent Advisory Committees, and other related school activities.

Analysis of the data indicated that 48% of the parent participants did not understand the purpose of the Bilingual Education Program. Fifty-two percent of the respondents stated that the purpose of the program was to maintain the native language and learn English at the same time. The survey revealed that 90% of the parents were satisfied with their children's grades. Parents indicated learning two languages was beneficial to their children's future. A Spearman Rho rank order correlation was used to determine whether there was statistical significance between parental involvement and the student's grade point average. The resulting correlation (0.19), was not statistically significant. This could be attributed to a sampling bias due to the fact that the surveys returned, may have been from parents that were interested and actively involved in their children's education. The children returning their surveys had grade point averages ranging from 2.5 to 4.0. This might also represent a bias. Responses indicated that parents felt they should be provided with parent-teacher conferences and Parent Teacher Organization meetings in their native languages. They felt this would encourage participation and interest. Parents and teachers both commented on a need for "parenting classes". One parent mentioned a need for understanding the changes in his child as he assimilated into the American society. Another respondent spoke of her fear of losing her children to another culture and another way of life. Interviewed teachers indicated that some parents would benefit from classes explaining what is expected of them as parents and what is expected of their children from the school system.

It was obvious from the survey comments written by the parents that they wanted to be involved in their children's academic life. Several stated they had little or no education themselves but wanted their children to have all the advantages of the good education this country had to offer. Some commented they would like weekly progress reports sent to help them stay abreast of their children's progress. The most significant finding was that 25 out of 65 students who reported having lunch with a parent at school during the first three six-weeks of the school year had a higher grade point average. These children had an average

GPA of 3.0, equivalent to a B. The parent participants in this study had children with a mean GPA of 2.75.

In conclusion, it is important to remember this study was limited and biased by the parent participants responding to the survey. It is suggested that future research of this nature not restrict the sampling data by requiring the parent participants to respond by written survey. It is suggested that selection of all parent participants be determined by some non-bias random sampling technique. Data gathered by a personal interview method would be more productive. This study has opened the door for future studies such as following these students in years to come to see if they are as academically successful once they exit the Bilingual Education Program.

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Improving school-home communication through the newsletter

NORA SANDOVEL-IBARRA

Abstract

The purpose of this research survey study was to determine the attitudes of parents toward the current Parent Teacher Association newsletter. The survey was completed by 192 parents of an elementary school located in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. The results indicated that approximately 80% of the parents were satisfied with the current newsletter. The questionnaire asked for data on demographics in addition to the 15 questions concerning the newsletter. The last question was open-ended. Several parents not only answered the question but, volunteered to help at the school. Even though the results indicated that the majority of parents were satisfied with the newsletter, there were some comments made by the parents which suggested further studies should be made to include the parents' attitudes toward the school environment and not just the newsletter.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to identify the attitudes that parents have toward the monthly parent newsletter produced by the school's Parent Teacher Association. The newsletter communicated information to the parents, an activity calender for each month, and a short section from the Parent Teacher Association.news on general school activities. It was hypothesized that the circulation of a newsletter, which is generated on the basis of a two-way dialogue between the home and the classroom, would result in an improved level of parental involvement in other activities as well. The objective of this project was to utilize the school newsletter, as a vehicle to monitor the involvement level of the parents in its generation, and determine whether or not their involvement was reflected in other school functions.

NORA SNADOVAL-IBARRA born in McAllen, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Pan American College, Edinburg, Texas. In 1990, she was named Pasadena Bilingual Teacher of the Year. She was a Title VII grant recipient and completed a Master of Science degree in Multicultural Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in May, 1992. Ms. Sandoval-Ibarra is a Peer Facilitator at L.F. Smith Elementary School in Pasadena ISD.

The data sources for this project came from a 761 student elementary school (grades PreKindergarten-5) located in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. The community served by the school is defined as lower income. The student population is as follows: 29.6 percent Caucasian, 63.4 percent Hispanic, 3.2 percent black, and 2.8 percent other. Approximately 70 % of the students received free or reduced lunch during the 1991-1992 school year. Free or reduced lunch is based on the income eligibility of their parents. The survey questionnaire was given to all students attending this school and completed by their parents or primary caregivers.

One hundred-ninety two surveys were returned. This represented a response rate of about 25%. The response rate was somewhat skewed, as there were families with more than one child enrolled and who returned only one survey regardless of the number of children enrolled. The survey was answered by 86% females as compared to 10% males, and 4% did not answer that particular question. Of the 761 surveys sent out, 238 were sent to parents of Spanish Bilingual students. Of the total surveys returned, only 20.8% came back from non-Bilingual students while 34.8% came back from the Bilingual/ESL students.

The parent survey was designed to assess the adequacy of the current newsletter. It was offered in both English and Spanish. The instrument consisted of a 22 item parental attitude questionnaire designed to assess the adequacy of the current newsletter. The Bilingual and ESL classes were given the Spanish version of the survey and all other classes were given the English version. The instrument consisted of yes, no, and no opinion responses. The last question was an open-ended question to determine parents' personal comments or their attitudes about the newsletter.

The instrument used for this survey addressed the parents' attitudes about the current newsletter, and the demographics section provided very useful descriptive information about the subjects participating in the study. The t-test was used to determine the significance of the difference between the means of the two groups, the Hispanics and white Non-Hispanics, who responded to the survey. Although not significant ($p > .05$), the Hispanic parents ($M = 25.09$, $SD = 5.49$) seemed to be more positive toward the newsletter than the white Non-Hispanic parents ($M = 23.77$, $SD = 6.96$).

The Analysis of Variance by parental occupation showed a significant difference ($p < .05$). A Scheffe post hoc analysis further indicated that the group that worked outside the home ($M = 25.87$; $df = 3$) was significantly more satisfied with the newsletter than the unemployed ($M = 18.4$; $df = 3$). Since the working parents had a limited amount of time to spend with their children, the newsletter offered them enough information about what goes on in school. Whereas, the parents who were unemployed have more time to talk to their children about school activities. In addition, a frequency distribution showed that 8% were satisfied with the newsletter, 6% were not entirely satisfied with the newsletter, and 14% had no opinion.

Parental involvement with a newsletter is a metaphor for parental involvement in other school functions and activities. The dialogue necessary for a newsletter is the same for parental involvement in other activities. It is one vehicle that can be used to cultivate a two-way dialogue between the classroom and home which, if conducted successfully, should be reflected in a higher level of parental involvement in other activities.

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Parental involvement through social involvement

CATHERINE R. JOHNSON

Abstract

This study was conducted to determine if exposure of parents to the school environment through low-pressure social type interactions with students, teachers, principals, and other school personnel would encourage them to become volunteers in the regular school volunteer program. The study was conducted with 4th and 5th grade English as a Second Language (ESL) students and their parents, at an elementary school located in an urban petro-chemical area adjacent to Houston, Texas. The students planned a series of four events and invited the parents to attend and participate. All attendance was on a voluntary basis. At the end of the series, a survey was sent to all parents, those attending and those who did not attend. Returned surveys were divided into two groups to reflect attendance. An unpaired t-test was applied to the findings to determine whether the parents attending did indeed have a more positive attitude towards volunteerism.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of parental involvement in relaxed, social-type activities at school among students, parents, and teachers, as well as to measure such impact on overall attitudes toward school and on student productivity. It was hypothesized that parental involvement in this type of activity, would allow them to become involved without experiencing pressure of any academic nature. The students would see their parents at school interacting with the teachers and developing relationships that would enable them to feel more at ease in the classroom setting. The subjects chosen to participate in this study were parents of students enrolled in 4th and 5th grade English as a Second Language (ESL) classes located in an urban school district adjacent to Houston, Texas. Approximately 40 students were involved in the planning and presentation of the

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program of events used for this study. This area is one of the lower socioeconomic neighborhoods in the area. The events were planned to encourage parents to visit the school and become acquainted with the faculty, staff and school setting. At the end of the program, surveys were sent to all parents, those who participated and those who did not. Twenty-eight surveys were returned to the school. All the surveys were completed by the mothers. All but one indicated formal education at least through elementary school, and 57% (16 of 28) were educated outside the United States.

The survey instrument consisted of an 18 item questionnaire requiring yes/no responses. Questions related to attitude assessment as well as questions that sought to determine the amount and type of help the students received at home on school assignments. Categories of questions covered areas such as parent/student relationships, parent/school relationships, parent-to-parent relationships, Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) involvement, and knowledge of volunteer programs. Opportunities were offered to the parents to attend after school "events" planned and sponsored by the students with the support and direction of the teachers. Four events were scheduled within an eight-week period. These included a Valentine Tea, a Rodeo Round-Up featuring a play and sing-a-long, a Texas Education Week Open House, and a "From-Then-Till-Now" Get Together featuring a tour of the school The tour allowed the parents to see various areas of the school in which they might choose to volunteer. The students created invitations and hand-delivered them to their parents.

The operative idea was to provide a time for parents to gather at the school and spend time with other parents, teachers, Bilingual instructional aides, and principals in a setting that was non-threatening. The inclusion of the students in the planning and organization of the activities offered an added incentive for the parents to attend. At the end of the program, surveys on parental involvement were sent to the parents of the 40 students enrolled in the two classes offering the activities. Two groups were created from the surveys which were returned. An active group was composed of the thirteen parents who had attended the activities, and a passive group, composed of the fifteen parents who had chosen not to attend the activities. The purpose of the survey was to determine if the attitudes of the parents were influenced positively by their involvement in the school activities.

Analysis of the findings included the calculation of frequency distributions for descriptive data on each item, and the use of an unpaired *t*-test to compare the responses of parents in the two groups. The overall findings did not indicate a significant difference ($p < .05$) between those who attended the activities ($M = .154$; $df = 26$) and those who did not attend the activities ($M = .133$; $df = 26$). This could be attributed to the smallness of the sample size. The enthusiasm of parents and children increased measurably as indicated by their responses. In spite of the demands placed on these parents by their work and families, a small increase in volunteerism was noted in those attending the activities. This involvement began almost immediately after the initial meeting planned by the students. Overall, 14% (4 of 28) actually became volunteers during the course of the program. Approximately 43% (12 of 28) of the mothers who returned the survey were working mothers, while 21% (6 of 28) said young children in the home prevented them from volunteering. Only 14% of 28 indicated that the language barrier kept them from becoming more involved in the program.

In order to encourage greater participation, an alternative child-care program might be set up to aid parents who would like to be involved. Encouraging area businesses to allow time-off for parents to volunteer in the schools is another option. The role of the classroom teacher should be to draw the parents into the school environment in a natural and non-threatening way. Utilizing the participation and enthusiasm of the students is another positive involvement technique. In addition to the obvious benefit of parental involvement, the increase in the self-esteem of the children as they plan and carry-out the activities is beneficial to the educational process.

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Parental involvement among Japanese parents living in Japan and those same parents living in the United States

HANAE KIMURA

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the levels of parental involvement among Japanese parents living in Japan and those same parents living in the United States. In Japan, *Juku* (after-school classes) are very popular, especially in urban areas. Children go to *Juku* after the regular school hours from one to five times a week for additional study. Japanese parents depend upon *Juku* for their children's success in school and on entrance exams. In so much as there are few or no *Juku* in the United States, it is necessary for Japanese parents to help their children with their studies. If children attend Japanese school part-time on Saturdays, they also have to complete their Japanese school assignments. Only parents can help the children do both of these. It is hypothesized that parental involvement changes when they come to the United States. On the other hand, the relationship between the teacher and parents in the United States is not as close as that in Japan. Therefore, it is expected that the Japanese parental school involvement in the United States will be much less than that in Japan. The subjects for this study consisted of fifty-three parents (mothers) of fourth grade through ninth grade students currently attending Japanese school on Saturdays in a suburban Houston school district. The data indicated that Japanese residing in the United States assist their children with their homework more frequently than they did previously in Japan.

Summary

In Japan, parental involvement usually refers to maternal involvement (Imamura, 1986). The mother provides all possible external support and manages the life of her child around preparation for stringent school entrance examinations. According to Japanese philosophy, the amount of effort a child makes determines success or failure. Japanese emphasize effort over

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ability (Holloway, 1986, 1988). The Japanese mother tends to focus on providing an environment conducive to study rather than direct help. It is the Japanese mother's job to remove the child's anxiety and provide the best environment for the child to study so that the child can make as much progress as possible. Sending her children to *Juku* is another indirect form of help which the mother selects in order to ensure her children's academic success.

Japanese universities are hierarchically ranked on the basis of public acceptance of the graduates of a university for specific employment. Employment tends to be lifelong in Japan (Takemura, 1986). Thus, when a student succeeds in entering or fails to enter a particular university between the ages of 18 to 25, his or her future is set. Entrance to good universities is contingent upon previous scholastic performance and rigorous entrance exams. In Japan, the *Juku* supplements student's scholastic progress and prepares them for success in the required entrance exams. Parents in Japan tend to depend upon *Juku* for their children's continued academic success. In 1989, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that 47,118 children were in compulsory education (elementary and junior high school) abroad (Hasebe, 1989). For these children living abroad, eighty-four full-time and one hundred and thirty-six part-time Japanese schools have been established. Japanese schools abroad offer a school curriculum that combines subjects in Japanese and an environment similar to that in Japan. Children can keep up with the Japanese curriculum during their stay abroad and at the same time not forget the Japanese school environment or situation. Japanese children who attend part-time Japanese schools on Saturdays have to complete both their American school homework and their Japanese school work. Since there are fewer *Juku* in the United States, Japanese parents have to help their children more with their studies.

The majority of the respondents in this research study were wives of Japanese executives brought to the United States for periods of two-to-three years They were basically from the mid-to-upper level socioeconomic group. Information derived from Statview analysis of the survey questions responses indicated that there is an increase in frequency of help with their children's homework from Japanese mothers and fathers in the United States. The analysis indicated that seven mothers (15%) out of 46 mothers who helped with their children's homework two to four times a week in Japan were helping their children with their homework

from two to four times a week or everyday in the United States. Twenty (28%) of the parents in this study indicated that two out of five mothers who did not help with their children's homework in Japan increased the frequency of helping their children with their homework in the United States. The most significant result was that 23 (43.3%) fathers who helped with their children's work only when they were asked by their children while in Japan increased their participation to two to four times a week in the United States. Six fathers (11.3%) still do not have experience in assisting their children with their studies after moving to the United States.

The data demonstrated that the Japanese parental involvement in the United States was different from that in Japan. Japanese parents help more with their children's studies in the United States. Twenty (28%) of the parents in this study indicated that children had more homework in the United States than they had in Japan. Those subjects were parents of eighth and ninth graders. The survey also indicated that 90% of mothers felt more anxiety about coming to the United States. Their concern was whether their children would be able to keep up with the curriculum in Japan while residing in the U.S. and also be able to succeed in the entrance examination of the desired school in Japan. In fact, 31 out of 53 mothers in this study answered that the mothers and their children would go back to Japan to start their children's study in Japan before the entire family went back if it was necessary.

It is essential to have both parental help as well as tutors for Japanese students in the United States. Japanese teachers expect parents to be actively involved in the life of the school and teachers are also expected to be involved in their students' home life (Enloe & Lewin, 1987). There is a stronger partnership of parents and teachers in Japan. The relationship between the teachers and the parents in the United States is not as close as that in Japan. The Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) in Japan also plays a more important direct involvement role. It publishes a newsletter, sponsors discussion groups, provides support for various events and activities, and even acts as a truant officer. Every Japanese mother is an active member of the P.T.A. in Japan.

Japanese students who know they will return to Japan must be prepared to deal with the rigid Japanese testing system as well as succeed in the American school system. With parental guidance and assistance, a Japanese student's English can become fluent enough to succeed in the curriculum of the American schools and

also maintain Japanese sufficiently to succeed in the curriculum in Japan.

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Attitudes of parents of middle school students in English as a second language program toward parental involvement

LAURA M. LOPEZ

Abstract

This study described the results gathered from administering a survey on parental involvement to parents of middle school ESL students. Information was collected from 96 parents with children enrolled in English as a Second Language classes in the Houston, Texas area. The results indicated that all parents were concerned to some degree for the education of their children regardless of such factors as gender, ethnicity and education level. The responses of the parents who returned completed questionnaires illustrated how age range, number of persons living in the household, place of birth and home language can affect the perceptions of families regarding the importance of participation or the adequacy of communication between school and home. The 50-item survey covered the seven areas of: communication, general participation, barriers, benefits, parent education programs, volunteering and program participation. Although there were some differences in how groups responded, it can be concluded that the majority of parents are concerned about the education of their children. Data, such as these, can help schools to organize programs and opportunities which will allow parents to become involved in their children's education based on individual needs and perceptions.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to gather information from parents of English as a Second Language students at a middle school in the Houston-Galveston area in Texas, regarding their perceptions and opinions of the educational system and how they would like to be involved in the education of their children. It was surmised that various demographic factors would have an influence on an individual's perception of the various factors affecting parental involvement. It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between the age of the respondent and the

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perception of benefits from becoming involved in the educational process whereby the older the subject, the more likely benefits would be perceived. It was also hypothesized that there would be a correlation between the number of persons in a household and the willingness of the respondent to participate in school related activities. Families with more children would be more willing to participate in programs. Finally, it was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between home language and the desire to participate in parent education programs. Where English was not spoken in the home, parents would feel a greater need to participate in adult education classes.

The subjects included 96 parents of students enrolled in the ESL program of the middle school that was studied. The majority (94%) were Hispanic and about 4% were Asian. Spanish was the most frequently occurring home language at 59%. A combination of English and Spanish was indicated by 33%, while 4% indicated Vietnamese. Most parents, 48% fell in the 36-45 age range, 28% were in the 26-35 group and 15% were in the 45-55 range. The education level indicated that 40% of subjects had finished or completed some elementary school, 31% had completed secondary and approximately 20% had completed some form of education or training beyond the high school level.

A self-designed questionnaire was used as the data gathering instrument for this study. It addressed parental attitudes toward the importance of participating in the educational process of their children. It also sought to gather specific ways in which the parents would like to be involved. An open-ended question was included to elicit additional suggestions and comments the parents may have wished to offer regarding a home/school partnership. The instrument was written in English and Spanish. The survey was comprised of fifty items to which the subjects could check all options that they felt were pertinent to their specific situations. Checking an item was equivalent to answering "yes" to a question. More specifically, the items were grouped together according to the following major areas: communication between home and school, importance of participation in general, expected benefits, barriers encountered, participation in school programs, volunteering and parent education. The demographic questions included the following areas: gender, age range, number living in the household, occupation or profession, place of birth, ethnicity, educational level and home language.

The data were collected, tabulated and analyzed. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted in order to compare the attitudes of the various sub-sample. Interrelationships were examined among the demographic factors and the areas addressed by the questions on the survey. When warranted post hoc tests were conducted. Data from the survey were analyzed to obtain a composite of parents' perceptions toward parental involvement in the educational process of their children at this particular school. Frequency distributions were generated in order to describe the demographic characteristics of the subjects who participated in this study.

A score was computed for each subject in each of the major areas covered by the survey and a mean score was obtained for each demographic factor analyzed. The results indicated that the number in the household had a significant effect ($p = 0.58$) on the likelihood of participation in general. The results of the post hoc test showed that the smaller the number in the household, the less likely the subject would be to participate in the child's education. Furthermore, the number in the household had an effect on communication that was approaching significance at .0895. Subjects with fewer persons living in the household tended to feel that communication is not as important as those families with a larger number of persons residing in the same home.

It was found that age range had a significant effect ($p = .035$) on general participation. The younger the parent responding, the less likely the subject was to view general participation as important. Similarly, age range had a significant impact ($p = .0421$) on benefits expected, in which younger parents were less likely to recognize possible benefits to be gained from becoming involved in their children's education.

A t-test indicated that home language was significant ($p = .024$) with regard to communication. Those speaking only Spanish responded more favorably to communication. Home language had an effect approaching significance ($p = .0686$) on parent education. Those parents speaking only Spanish were more likely to show interest in parent education programs than those who indicated both English and Spanish being spoken at home. Although it was not hypothesized, place of birth had a significant effect ($p = .0174$) on the perception of barriers. Those born in the United States were more likely to report difficulties with the educational process of their children as compared to those parents who were born in Mexico.

The responses to this survey have produced the initial information needed to begin the establishment of an effective parental involvement program in the school under study. The research did provide background knowledge so that educators could better understand the community and its needs. The data generated from the responses to the parent survey gave insight as to how the parents view their role in the educational process of their children.

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Historical review of parental involvement in American schools

REBECCA LOPEZ

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to randomly review and document parental involvement programs in the United States during the 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's. The parental involvement programs that were randomly selected from each decade were: the 1960's, Project Head Start and the University of Oregon Follow Through Program; the 1970's, Memphis City Schools, Home-Based Early Childhood Program and the Original Follow Through Program; the 1980's, the Parents As Tutors (P.A.T.) and New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program; and the 1990's, the Practical Parent Education and the Parent Institute. Two matrix tables were developed for analysis using the Joyce Epstein's five types of parental involvement and the seven elements of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory that are present in promising programs. The programs were then analyzed according to the criterion of both Epstein and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Research. The Head Start Program (60's), The University of Oregon Follow Through Program (60's), The Parents as Tutors Project (80's), The Practical Parent Education Program (90's), and The Parent Institute programs all had both the 5 types of Epstein and the 7 elements of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Study of these programs indicates they reflected the social and economic needs of the years of their origin.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine characteristics of parental involvement programs over a four decade period. The research questions were: What were the significant parental involvement programs and their characteristics from a historical view? What benefits does parental involvement have on student achievement

Two significant parental involvement programs were selected from each of the four decades from the '60's to the 90's. Those programs selected were: the 1960's, Project Head Start and the

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University of Oregon Follow Through Program; the 1970's, Memphis City Schools, Home-Based Early Childhood Program and the Original Follow Through Program; the 1980's, the Parents As Tutors (P.A.T.) and New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program; and the 1990's, the Practical Parent Education and the Parent Institute. These programs were then analyzed using the criterion for effective parental involvement programs as identified and categorized by Joyce Epstein and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Research.

The five types of parental involvement programs developed by Joyce Epstein are:

Type 1. Parenting;
Type 2. Communication;
Type 3. Volunteering;
Type 4. Learning at home;
Type 5. Representing other parents.

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory research identified the following seven elements that were common to promising parental involvement programs:

1. Written policies;
2. Administrative support;
3. Training;
4. Partnership approach;
5. Two-way communication;
6. Networking; and
7. Evaluation.

Five of the programs reviewed had all the components of Epstein and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. They were: The Head Start Program (60's); The University of Oregon Follow Through Program (60's); The Parents as Tutors Project (80's); The Practical Parent Education Program (90's), and The Parent Institute (90's).

The two programs selected from the 60's, Head Start and the University of Oregon Follow Through Program were innovative efforts to interrupt the cycle of poverty and provided intergenerational education in parenting and literacy. Parents who participated in Head Start were given the education to exercise control over their own lives by influencing decisions about the care of their children. Parents were given career training. The University of Oregon's Follow Through Program focused on teaching basic and cognitive skills, as well as positive attitudes toward self and learning, to kindergarten through third grade

children. Parents were empowered through Parent Assessment Committee (PAC) committees to monitor the implementation of this program. Both programs meet the criterion of both Epstein and Southwest Educational Laboratory.

The programs studied from the 70's were Memphis City Schools, Home-Based Early Childhood Program and the Original Follow Through Program. The Memphis City Schools Home-Based Early Childhood Program's primary goal was to help parents develop the skills needed to support and teach their children effectively. This program lacked Epstein's type 5 involvement, representing other parents. The program also lacked one element of the seven elements of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, networking. The Original Follow Through Program was a nation-wide attempt to provide unique educational settings for low-income students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. This program lacked type 5, representing other parents. It also was missing one of the seven elements of Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, networking. Giant strides were made to assist low-income students and their parents in the 70's. The missing ingredient of the 70's was a lack of parental recruitment and training. Yet both programs had a high degree of success.

The structure of the families of the 80's changed drastically. Only 10 percent of the families represented the traditional family of past generations. The families were dual-career, single parent, a step family, or a family that had moved an average of 14 times. Social, economic, and environmental conditions had an effect on the families of the 80's. These factors affected the fabric of the family and the development of children.. Two programs representative of this decade were Parents As Tutors Project and New Parents as Teacher: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program The Parents as Tutors Project was an Academic Excellence Project funded by Title VII to serve 150 parents of limited English proficient children. This project focused on parents' ability to understand their children, despite language barriers. It had all five types of parental involvement of Epstein as well as the seven elements of Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. The New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program. This program provided further support for parent education. It furthered the support programs which had direct effects on children's intellectual, achievement, language and social capabilities. This program had all but one of Epstein's

parental involvement types, representation of other parents. This program did not share information, resources or technical expertise and was missing one of Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's elements, networking. The programs of the 80's began the movement toward total family involvement which carried over into the 90's.

The schools of the 90's have attempted to create climates of support and respect for parents. Comprehensive parental involvement policies with nationwide and state networking capabilities are evolving. This is seen in the two programs studied for the 90's, the Practical Parent Education Program and the Parent Institute. The Practical Parent Education Program is a primary prevention program designed to support and assist today's parents in their efforts to rear self-confident, responsible, and mentally healthy children. The goal of the program is to reach out to families before problems begin and to provide parents with community support, an understanding of developmental stages in children, and choices in positive parenting skills. This program has all the elements of both Epstein and the Southwest Education Development Laboratory. This program is widely used in Texas. The Parent Institute also reaches out to parents and seeks to educate them in the skills of parenting. It also meets the criterion of Epstein and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Partnerships between schools and parents are being developed to improve the educational opportunities of the family.

Parental involvement programs have changed over the decades in response to changing social values and economic pressures. We see from this study, benefits not only confined to early childhood, but also conducive to intergenerational education. Schools now seek to build on the strengths and abilities of the parents and families whose children they serve. Parental involvement programs have changed in response to the changing American families' needs. This can be seen in the evolution of the programs studied. Parental involvement programs are becoming social and educational resources for the entire family in the Houston area.

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The use of bimonthly English For Other Speakers newsletter with a parent corner in raising the level of limited English proficient parent involvement

SANDRA JOY MANGARELLA

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if through the use of an English For Other Speakers (E.S.O.L.) newsletter for parents, produced by their children, would increase parental involvement. The study required the production of a class newsletter which contained articles specifically written to engage parental interest. The group under study consisted of twenty 11th grade E.S.O.L. III high school students and a control measure of twenty sophomore E.S.O.L. II high school students and their parents who lived in a petro-chemical industrial area adjacent to Houston, Texas. The twenty junior E.S.O.L. II students created and edited a bilingual bimonthly newsletter to their parents. The only means of parental communication for the control group were the normal channels used by the E.S.O.L. teacher. Both groups were invited to attend a family gathering at school where a survey specifically designed by the principal investigator to determine parental attitudes about the school and their involvement was given to parents. The results of the survey combined with the attendance data did not support the hypothesis that the communication channels developed through a newsletter communication could increase the parental involvement of limited English proficient parents.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this research study was to examine the results of a student produced newsletter to break down barriers and create enough interest in LEP parents that would induce parental involvement. A secondary purpose of this project was to ascertain parental attitudes about the E.S.O.L. teacher, E.S.O.L. program and possible level of parental involvement and the high school program in general. It was hypothesized that parents of participating limited

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English proficient students would become more involved in the student's school activities through interest developed from reading their own children's newsletters. The limited English population encompassed approximately eight percent of the student body which was overall sixty percent Hispanic. Three levels of English for Speakers of Other Languages (E.S.O.L.) instruction--E.S.O.L. I, II, and III were offered to students of limited English proficiency. All LEP students had Spanish as their primary language. The parental involvement of limited English proficient students at this particular high school had been very low. The contact with LEP parents had been difficult due to lack of telephones in the students' homes.

The students in the study group created a bimonthly E.S.O.L. newsletter, which they named, La Raza. This was a student-based production in which the students decided which activities/ideas/stories were appropriate for publication. The principal investigator stipulated that one article of interest be written in Spanish for their parents. Also included in the newsletter was an open invitation to drop in or contact the teacher or school at any time. The control group of E.S.O.L. students did not create a student newsletter but would initiate their own newsletter in the future. The only methods of parental contact for the control group was an invitation to the parents to participate, letters such as bilingual progress reports, and the invitation to the Family Night. The overall attendance was 122 people. Of the 122 people in attendance, eighteen (18) E.S.O.L. families were represented. The families were made up of varying amounts of people, ranging from a high of ten people to a low of one person, usually a parent. The families were made up of varying amounts of people, ranging from a high of ten people to a low of one person, usually a parent. The remainder of the group consisted of E.S.O.L. students, one content area teacher, and an assistant principal from the high school. Six of the families represented at the Family Night came from the study group, E.S.O.L. III, and three came from the control group. An equal number of parents came from the E.S.O.L. teacher's other two classes of E.S.O.L. I and E.S.O.L. II, respectively.

The survey analysis provided the following information. The difference in the number of parents from the experimental group and the control group is not statistically significant. Using a Chi-Square (x^2)test in comparing the categorical data of observed

parents: 6 in the experimental group (E.S.O.L. III) and 3 in the control group (E.S.O.L. II) and the expected number of parents (4.5), it was calculated that x^2calc· (1),x^2 crit (3.841). However, significant parent interest was visually demonstrated. Parents indicated that 100% of their information came from the school by mail. One hundred percent of the parents wanted to receive information from the school and were satisfied with what the school had sent. Seventy-five percent of the E.S.O.L. III parents had read La Raza one or more times. Zero percent of parents from the control group had read or seen La Raza. Eighty-three percent of the parents felt that the E.S.O.L. program was very effective. Seventeen percent of the parents polled felt that the E.S.O.L. was effective.

With regard to possible parental involvement in the E.S.O.L. classroom the following was indicated. Seventy-five percent of the parents indicated they would help their children at home with work. One hundred percent of the parents would encourage their children to study. Fifty-eight percent would chaperon a party/field trip. Seventeen percent would tutor at school. One percent said they would encourage their children to come to school.

The results of the project suggests that the benefits of increased LEP parental contact by the E.S.O.L. teacher may possibly result in greater achievement in the limited English proficient students. The Family Night or party could be a more valuable option to increasing parental involvement than any school-sponsored Open House night, parent conference, or even classes for parents. Though these results are significant, three brief time-periods covered by the project limit its scope. The results suggest a need for more research, particularly in the "means" for getting LEP parents' attention. LEP parents need to be encouraged and stimulated to see what the schools are doing for their children and feel comfortable with it. They also need to know what they can do themselves to help.

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Determining parental attitudes about bilingual and ESL education

ALICIA MUÑIZ

Abstract

This research study examined parental attitudes and perceptions about Bilingual/ESL Education that create barriers to effective parental involvement. The subjects in this study included 63 parents of Bilingual /ESL students. The subjects were from a low-socioeconomic class, mostly females with a high school education or less. The study contained a survey questionnaire divided into three sections. The sections dealt with the subjects' background characteristics, their attitudes and perceptions about Bilingual/ESL Education, and with their willingness to become involved in a positive way. It was found that the survey could be used as a valuable tool to determine parental attitudes regarding Bilingual/ESL Education. Where these attitudes represented barriers to positive parental involvement, recommendations for corrective action were formulated, for presentation to the school in the hopes that these could result in a more effective Bilingual/ESL Education.

Summary

This study was designed to identify the factors that can result in parental non-involvement or negative involvement, to understand the barriers created by negative attitudes and misconceptions, and to suggest methods to encourage positive parental involvement. English as a Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual teachers generally agree that parental involvement can be a critical element in the success of their programs. The degree to which parents participate in their children's academic activities and the extent to which they contribute to their children's success is largely determined by prevailing attitudes, cultural influences, the socioeconomic environment, their own level of education, and the

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effectiveness of programs designed to get them involved (Barnwell, & Villareal, 1990). It is imperative that a parental involvement program be designed specifically for a particular community, and even for a specific school, to increase the chances of success.

There are ways to increase positive parental involvement in order to improve the effectiveness of ESL and Bilingual Education. One of the first tasks to eliminate the barriers created by negative attitudes and misconceptions is to understand the factors peculiar to a given school community that create these negative influences. This can be accomplished through a properly designed survey. The critical questions addressed by this study were: Were there unique characteristics within a particular school community that required specific approaches to encourage parental involvement? Could a survey identify principal factors such that appropriate tailoring of the overall parental participation program result in increased success?

The participants of this survey were parents of students in kindergarten through third grade Bilingual Education classes and the parents of students in a fourth grade ESL class from the same elementary school in a large mid-urban area adjacent to Houston, Texas. The survey instrument was designed to learn about the parents' background in terms of education, socioeconomic status, and traditions that influenced these attitudes or that could possibly affect the success of a parental participation program. The results of the survey were divided into three parts using frequency tables. The first part dealt with the subjects' background characteristics; the second part of the survey dealt with attitudes and perceptions about Bilingual/ESL Education.; and the third part dealt with the willingness of parents to become involved in positive ways. There were 103 surveys prepared and sent out to the parents. Sixty-three (61%) surveys were returned. All the participants were Hispanics. There were 43 (68.3%) mothers, 18 (28.6%) fathers, and two (3.2%) guardians. Fifty-eight (92.1%) of the respondents were born in Mexico. Spanish was the language spoken at home. The results of the survey indicated that the majority of the participants had lived in the United States less than five years and that most of them had an educational level of high school or less. The majority of the particpants had an annual income under $10,000.

The majority of the respondents did not know the purpose of Bilingual/ESL Education. Nine persons (14%) said that the purpose was to learn English and not lose culture. Even though

many could not totally understand the purpose of Bilingual/ESL Education, more that half said they wanted their children to exit the program as soon as possible. The responses to this question did not seem to indicate a dissatisfaction with the Bilingual/ESL Education, but rather a strong desire by the parents to have their children mainstreamed at an early opportunity.

The parents felt that Bilingual/ESL Education does more than just try to maintain the Spanish language and culture of the child. Parents also felt that children need to be in the program for more than two years. They felt that children should not have to speak only English in school. They also agreed that it is not necessary for the teacher to teach lessons in English only. Parents indicated that they understood that Bilingual/ESL Education does not slow down their children's educational process, or classify their children as slow learners. The parents also believed that their children will have trouble learning in all-English classroom. Most importantly, they perceived that Bilingual/ESL Education as equal in quality to non-Bilingual Education.

The third part of the survey dealt with positive parental involvement. The majority of parents had two children enrolled in school. More than half were willing to get involved in school activities such as volunteering in the classroom for about an hour a week. While parents were willing to become involved in school activities, most of them needed some services themselves in order to participate. Twenty-seven (42%) parents indicated that they needed child-care, 22 (35 %) of the parents needed translators, and ten (15 %) needed transportation to school. Also, 22 (35%) said the best time to attend a meeting or visit a school was during school hours, while 21 (33%) parents said evenings were a better time. Fifty-five (88%) of the parents had met their children's teacher and 41 (65%) had attended Bilingual/ESL meetings.

The results of this research survey indicated that the parents participating in the survey supported Bilingual/ESL Education. Many parents did not know the purpose of Bilingual/ESL Education, although more than half believed the Bilingual program is not just a program to maintain the Spanish language and culture of the child. The parents indicated that they preferred that lessons not be presented in English only. More than half the parents preferred that their children exit the Bilingual /ESL Education as soon as possible. A potential problem that was identified involved seven (9%) parents who responded that they believed that the Bilingual/ESL Education slows down their children's educational

process. A recommendation to the school again would be to encourage and inform these parents of the benefits and purposes of the Bilingual/ESL Education.

Regardless of family background or characteristics, almost all parents care about their children's progress in school and want to know how to assist their children (Epstein, 1986). A questionnaire may be designed and utilized as a tool to provide some insight into barriers that impede positive parental involvement in different school programs. The results of this survey study indicated that a properly designed questionnaire can be a very effective tool to determine parental attitudes and perceptions about Bilingual/ESL Education.

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Characteristics of a successful parental involvement program

CHRISTINE ORTIZ-GATLIN

Abstract

This study involves an examination of the common characteristics of successful parental involvement programs exhibited in existing minority parental involvement programs. Its objective was to validate the current value and applicability of those characteristics in the educational system of the nineties through a survey of 26 professional educators. The programs selected in this study dealt primarily with the parents of minority students. The types of involvement were categorized into three main areas of parental involvement: at-home, within the school, and in the community. The data demonstrated a greater awareness level of parental participation programs among educational administrators.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the common characteristics of successful parental involvement programs exhibited in existing minority parental involvement programs. This study was an attempt to ascertain the level of awareness of administrators and teachers in southeast Texas. Twenty-six persons were selected to respond to a survey prepared for this study. Their level of activity was varied as well as their racial and gender classifications. Two basic research questions were addressed. What are the successful characteristics of existing, minority, parental involvement programs? Is there a different awareness level of the value of parental participation programs among educators? The survey participants were 26 professional educators who developed and implemented parental involvement programs in public school districts located in the Greater Houston Metropolitan area. The participants' school districts were identified as having predominantly Hispanic populations and were

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selected from the Texas School Board Handbook. Their occupational levels ranged from teachers to special counselors to principals and school directors. The backgrounds of the participants were one black, seven white, and 18 Hispanic. The primary educational classification of the subjects was graduate professionals, which comprised 21 of the 26 subjects. The age range was 25 years through age 65. The languages spoken by the participants at home were 11 English-only, 12 both English and Spanish, two Spanish-only, and one combination of English, French and Spanish. This study had a limitation because of the relatively small number of participants.

A 26-item dichotomous survey was designed to measure positive parental involvemen: characteristics already present in existing programs. The survey questions covered three main categories of parental involvement: in-home, at school and within the community. The survey instrument requested the respondents to indicate their professional opinions on the value of the previously identified successful parental involvement program characteristics as presented in the research literature. The instrument allowed for yes, no, and no opinion responses. The instrument had items directly addressing the three categories of in-home (five items), at school (thirteen items) and within the community (four items). Questions were formatted to capitalize on the practical experiences of the survey participants.

Analysis was accomplished through a frequency distribution for descriptive data on each item. The scores summary reflected a response range of 46 to 53, with 4% of the participants rating the characteristics perfectly. A total of 76% of all participants were clustered together at a score level of 46 or above. This indicated a high degree of agreement among the subjects on the existing characteristics of parental involvement programs. In addition, a one-way Anova was used to determine significance between the different levels. A significant difference ($p. < .05$) was found by occupation. A Scheffe post hoc analysis determined that principals ($m = 50.25$) were significantly ($p < .05$) more aware of the positive characteristics of parental involvement programs than were the program directors ($m = 47.5$). A trend approaching significant difference ($p. = .0583$) was also found by occupation when the in-the-school category of parent involvement was measured. No other significant differences were found in the total group responses.

According to the findings of this modest study, educators in the field are in high agreement with the existing characteristics of successful parental involvement programs as conveyed in the study of the current literature. The characteristics of these existing successful programs were incorporated into the survey to measure the opinions of educators familiar with parental involvement programs. While the survey confirmed uniform agreement on the characteristics, statistics generated by the survey revealed a variation in the awareness level between principals and directors in the category of occupation. When the items were grouped by existing characteristics of successful programs according to at-home, in-school and in-the-community, a trend approaching significance was found in the in-school category between principals and directors. This indicated a higher awareness level by the principals and directors in regard to the value of minority parental involvement in the in-school programs.

From the increased awareness of and the emphasis on parental involvement in the past decade, many ideas of what constitutes a good program have emerged. It is apparent that each school or school district has its own unique set of needs for the population it serves. Administrators must be aware that parental involvement programs should be geared in the direction that will best meet the needs of the students, parents and immediate community.

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Parental involvement in the school: the role of the adult English as a second language teacher

REBECCA E. PRATHER

Abstract

A group of adult English as a Second Language students who had children enrolled in public schools were surveyed in order to identify possible barriers to parental involvement of the Limited English Proficient parents in the schools, to determine ways in which the adult ESL teacher could more effectively encourage parental involvement, and to generate suggestions for programs and/or services that could be offered by local public schools to encourage parental involvement. The survey found that communication from and with the schools was not efficient -- most (87.5%) reported that written communications were in English, and 68.8% reported that there was no one at the school who spoke their language. The parents expressed a strong interest in having special sessions offered at the schools for them. The topics they were interested in seeing offered reflected the needs of the person trying to understand a new environment: sessions on language, culture and understanding the school system were of particular interest. Other topics of importance reflected a strong interest in being involved in their children's education -- they wanted sessions on understanding class curriculum and on techniques for helping their children with school work at home. The principal investigator concludes that more effective communications, combined with special programs offered by the schools using their staff and adult ESL teachers would result in increased parental involvement of the LEP parent.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether teachers of adult ESL students enrolled in a Texas community college could serve as facilitators of parental involvement of the language minority parents in their classes. In order to clarify the ways in which the adult ESL teacher could best be of help, data was needed from the parents themselves.

A questionnaire was designed to elicit information regarding reasons for involvement or non-involvement in the schools. The

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survey was in English and was administered by the instructors of the adult ESL classes. Instructors went over the survey questions in class to be sure there was no confusion caused by language. Help in translating was provided when needed. Each survey participants had at least one child enrolled in the public school system.

Although the survey sample represented a large number of cultural backgrounds (13 countries with 12 different languages), it was possible to identify trends that were generalized across all of the groups. The survey results indicated that the parents had a high level of interest in their children's schools -- 84% reported having met their child's teacher; 87.8% reported having visited their children's school, and 80% of the parents having visited the school more than once. The survey also found that communication from and with the schools may not have been as efficient as desired -- most respondents (87.5%) reported that written communications were in English, and 68.8% reported there was no one at the school who spoke their language. Parents of all backgrounds expressed a strong interest (93.9%) responded favorably to having special sessions offered for them at the schools. When offered a range of potential programs for these special sessions, the respondents indicated the most interest in the following: (1) English lessons for parents (69%), (2) learning about the American school system (58%), (3) learning about ways to help with children's homework (54.5%), (4) having the teacher explain the class curriculum (52%), and (5) a class on American culture (45%). These topics reflected the needs of people trying to understand a new environment and the interest in, and the willingness to participate in their children's education. The survey results gave supportive evidence that there was an interest by the LEP parents in their children's education and a willingness to participate in it. The data indicated the specific types of programs LEP parents preferred. It would appear that the adult ESL teacher could best serve as a facilitator of parental involvement through a cooperative effort with the public schools. The trained adult ESL teacher has techniques at his/her disposal for teaching both English language and culture to people of varied backgrounds. The public school administrators can provide a location where the parents feel comfortable, as well as a staff with the expertise to handle areas not normally dealt with by the ESL teacher, such as helping parents understand the school curriculum and techniques for helping children with homework. More effective communications, combined with special programs offered

by the schools using both their support staff and ESL teachers of adults, would result in a higher comfort level for the LEP parents. The realization that parents are important components of the educational team would in itself lead to increased parental involvement.

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Comparison between attitudes of parents of five- to seven-year-old and of eight- to twelve-year old limited English proficient (LEP) students toward English as a second language programs

HAZEL RAMIREZ
LILA KAY COOK

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to compare the differences between parental attitudes of five- to seven-year-old LEP students and eight- to twelve-year-old LEP students with regard to the ESL programs currently serving their children. It was hypothesized that parents of five- to seven-year-old LEP students would exhibit a more positive attitude towards ESL programs than parents of LEP students ages eight to twelve. The instrument used was a Likert scale survey to assess the attitudes of sixty-four Hispanic parents randomly chosen from a an urban school sample in a large metropolitan area of the southeastern United States. There were three main findings indicated from the analysis of the survey: The t-test data seemed to suggest that the attitudes of the parents of LEP students ages five to seven are more positive towards the ESL programs when compared to the parent's attitudes of LEP students ages eight to twelve. From the ANOVA and the subsequent Sheffé F-test post hoc analysis, it was suggested that in the areas of parental perception of ESL programs and parent and school involvement, the higher the level of education, the more positive the attitudes of parents toward the ESL programs.

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Summary

The realization that languages other than English are considered a necessary mode of instruction is a relatively new happening in American education. Yet, with the influx of immigrants from other countries who do not speak English, bilingual education has become a necessity. For example, by the year 2000, it is estimated that the Hispanic and Asian populations in the United States will have increased by 84 percent and 103 percent respectively (Huddy & Sears, 1987). The purpose of this research was to compare the differences between parental attitudes of five- to seven-year-old LEP students and eight- to twelve-year-old LEP students with regard to the ESL programs currently serving their children. It was hypothesized that parents of the five- to seven-year-old LEP students would exhibit a more positive attitude towards and have more knowledge of ESL programs than parents of LEP students ages eight to twelve. It was also hypothesized that the higher the level of parental education, the higher their awareness regarding ESL programs and school involvement, and the more positive the attitudes of parents toward the ESL programs.

Research has shown that, overall, parents of non-native speakers of English feel that their children should receive instruction in bilingual programs. The types of programs vary with the culture and individual parent's perceptions of what programs would best benefit their children. According to Torres (1988), the effectiveness of bilingual education program may be affected by the attitudes of the parents. If the parents are positive toward the programs, the likelihood of the students being positive toward the programs is strong. Establishing a positive attitude between parents, children, and the public schools can only improve the bilingual programs in the United States.

The subjects in these projects were thirty-four parents of students, ages five to seven, and thirty parents of students, ages eight to twelve. Their children had been identified as LEP at an urban school in a large metropolitan area of the southeastern United States. The study was done with parents of Hispanic origin

An independent t-test was used to measure differences between means. A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between parents of primary age students ($M = 22.853$; $df = 62$) and those of elementary age students ($M = 21.8$; $df = 62$) regarding parental awareness of and attitudes towards ESL programs. These results seem to indicate that parents of the primary age LEP students are

more positive towards their children being involved in an ESL program.

In addition, two ANOVAs were calculated to determine differences by educational level achieved by the parents. The results show that there is a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the area of parent's perception of the ESL program. A Scheffe post hoc analysis showed that the group with little or no education ($M = 20$) was significantly ($p < .05$) less informed about ESL programs than the group with the highest level of education ($M = 24$).

The results of a second ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the area of parent and school involvement. In the Scheffe post hoc analysis, the results indicated that the group with the highest level of education ($M = 23.4$) held a more positive attitude than the parents with no education ($M = 15.333$). As the level of education increased, the parent's attitudes became progressively more positive.

The study, therefore, suggests that schools should seek more involvement of and provide instruction for parents of older LEP students. As dropout rates, violence, and drug use seem to be increasing among members of this age group, a stronger home-school partrnership is necessary to reverse these trends.

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